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FOR A SYNODAL CHURCH: COMMUNION, PARTICIPATION, MISSION
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Feast of the Santo Niño (A) — White

January 15, 2023

Holy Childhood Day/Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

In the Gospel (Mt 18:1-5, 10), the disciples ask who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. Jesus replies by placing a child in their midst and declaring that to enter the Kingdom they must become like children. He warns them not to despise the little ones.

Sometime later (Mt 19:13-15), children are brought to Jesus for his blessing. The disciples shoo the children away, thinking perhaps that the children are a disturbance to their Master. But Jesus says (becomes “indignant” in Mk 10:14) that children are not to be prevented from coming to him, “for the Kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.”

While these passages suggest that the disciples find it difficult to understand and live Jesus’ teaching, they also reflect how the Jews look at children. There must be something gravely wrong in a community that regards children with suspicion.

The disciples do not see that children are incapable of inflicting harm or evil on anybody. Children’s motives are pure, and they suffer not from malice or evil intention. Children are always in search of love and help. It is unfortunate when adults refuse them these gifts, knowing that without their intervention, children are helpless.

Children play some important role in the mission of Jesus. The boy who offers his five barley loaves and two fish is at the background of the multiplication of the bread, feeding five thousand men (Jn 6:1-15), not counting women and children (Mt 14:21). It is this boy’s generosity that ignites God’s own care and compassion for the thousands of hungry people



Children as Bearers of Holiness

Fr. Tim Melliza, SSP

following Jesus. These people, who are like sheep without a shepherd, find a leader in this boy who without hesitation shares his food with the apostles.

Children are first in God’s Kingdom because of their generosity and spontaneity, easily sensing the needs of others. In other words, to possess the heart of a child does not mean being simply dependent on others but also actively participating in mission. Adults can do this only if they imitate the generosity of children. Once God touches the hearts of children who recognize their utter dependence on him, they open a floodgate of generous love that should touch the hearts of everyone.

Are children capable of

intense holiness? As first citizens in God’s Kingdom, they surely can be shining models of holiness. The greatest sinners and criminals on our planet are adults. Children can only be innocent or saintly.

The beatification of Carlo Acutis, an English-born Italian teenager, who died in 2006 (at the age of 15), touched millions around the world—not only by his peaceful death but also by his short life of pure holiness. At five years old, he pestered his parents to stop at churches where he participated in Masses. His agnostic parents returned to the Catholic faith to understand their boy. They asked the local priest to allow Carlo to receive First Communion at the age of six.

Carlo then began a life that revolved around daily Masses, eucharistic adoration, and school. From home or from school, he would meet poor people and migrants whom he would help with food and clothes. In school, he helped his classmates against bullies and saved the marriage of his classmates’ parents on the verge of divorce.

“To be always united with Jesus, this is my plan of life.” Thus did Carlo outline the distinctive feature of his short life: living with Jesus, for Jesus, in Jesus. An amateur computer programmer, Carlo documented eucharistic miracles around the world and catalogued them onto a website which he created before his death from leukemia.

At his funeral, his father got consoled by the unnamed thousands who paid tribute to his son. His death was glorious, the proclamation of a saint. He was declared patron of missions in the digital world.

THE INTRODUCTORY RITES

Entrance Antiphon (Is 9:5) *(Recited when there is no opening song)*

A child is born for us, and a son is given to us; his scepter of power rests upon his shoulder and his name will be called messenger of great counsel.

Greeting

(The sign of the cross is made here)

P—Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All—And with your spirit.

Introduction

(These [or similar words] may be used to address the assembly)

P—The devotion to the Holy Child is the oldest and one of the most popular in the Philippines, and the Holy See has granted us special permission to celebrate the Feast of the Sto. Niño every third Sunday of January. The feast brings to our attention the mystery of childhood. This means having an open and trusting disposition to accept the Lord's gifts with gratitude, while seeing ourselves as humble stewards who serve the Lord in the least of our brothers and sisters.

Penitential Act

P—Brethren (brothers and sisters), let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries. *(Pause)*

All—I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned in my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done and in what I have failed to do, *(Strike your breast)* through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault; therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all the Angels and Saints, and you, my brothers and sisters, to pray for me to the Lord our God.

P—May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.
All—Amen.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

P—Christ, have mercy.

All—Christ, have mercy.

P—Lord, have mercy.

All—Lord, have mercy.

Gloria

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to people of good will. We praise you, we bless you, we adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, Lord God, heavenly King, O God, almighty Father. Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son, Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us; you take away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; you are seated at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collect

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Almighty God, your only Son, begotten from all ages, humbled himself as a child in Nazareth and became subject to Mary and Joseph. Grant that we may learn from his example to embrace your will in all things and, holding fast to the dignity of all, serve our lowly brothers and sisters with open hands and gentle heart.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

All—Amen.

LITURGY OF THE WORD



First Reading (Is 9:1–6) *(Sit)*

Isaiah prophesies that through the child who shall be called Prince of Peace, God will grant peace and rejoicing to his people.

A reading from the Book of the Prophet Isaiah

THE people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; upon those who dwelt in the land of gloom a light has shone. You have brought them abundant joy and great rejoicing, as they rejoice before you as at the harvest, as people make merry when dividing spoils. For the yoke that burdened them, the pole on their shoulder, and the rod of their taskmaster you have smashed, as on the day of Midian. For every boot that tramped in battle, every cloak rolled in blood, will be burned as fuel for flames. For a child is born to us, a son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this!

—The word of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.

Responsorial Psalm (Ps 97)

R—The Lord is king; let the many isles be glad.

Fr. Dindo Purto, SSP

The Lord is king;
let the ma-ny isles be glad.

1. Sing to the LORD a new song;/ for he has done wondrous deeds;/ his right hand has won victory for him,/ his holy arm. (R)

2. The LORD has made his salvation known:/ in the sight of the nations he has revealed his justice./ He has remembered his kindness and his faithfulness/ toward the house of Israel. (R)

3. All the ends of the earth have seen/ the salvation by

our God./ Sing joyfully to the LORD, all you lands;/ break into song; sing praise. (R)

4. Sing praise to the LORD with the harp,/ with the harp and melodious song./ With trumpets and the sound of the horn/ sing joyfully before the King, the LORD. (R)

Second Reading (Eph 1:3–6, 15–18)

God loves us and has made us his adopted children in Christ. Paul reminds us to live up to our dignity by leading a holy and blameless life.

A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul to the Ephesians

BROTHERS AND SISTERS: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.

Therefore, I, too, hearing of your faith in the Lord Jesus and of your love for all the holy ones, do not cease giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a Spirit of wisdom and revelation resulting in knowledge of him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened, that you may know what is the hope that belongs to his call, what are the riches of glory in his inheritance among the holy ones.

—The word of the Lord.
All —Thanks be to God.

Alleluia (Jn 1:14, 12) (Stand)

All—Alleluia, alleluia. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel (Mt 18:1–5, 10)

P—A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew
All—Glory to you, O Lord.

THE disciples approached Jesus and said, “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?”

He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, “Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me.

“See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father.”

—The Gospel of the Lord.
All—Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Homily (Sit)

Profession of Faith (Stand)

All—I believe in one God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, born of the Father before all ages. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father; through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven, (at the words that follow, up to and including and became man, all bow) and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate, he suffered death and was buried, and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his kingdom will

have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Prayer of the Faithful

P—Brothers and sisters, let us ask the Father to help us to choose him always above all things so we may live the fullness of life he has originally intended for us. Full of trust, we pray:

R—Eternal Father, embrace us as your children.

C—Help our Church leaders remain faithful channels of your grace as they lovingly listen to the needs of the flock you have entrusted to them. We pray: (R)

C—May our national and local leaders, and we the citizenry, opt to make radical choices towards the common good and the care of our common home always. We pray: (R)

C—Help all families grow stronger in love. May they make the radical choice to stay in love with each other especially in times when it is most difficult to love. We pray: (R)

C—Welcome our departed loved ones who have chosen you above all things in their earthly life, into your heavenly Kingdom. We pray: (R)

C—Let us pray for the urgent concerns of our community and our personal intentions (pause). We pray: (R)

P—Eternal God, make us accept your Son, the Word-made-flesh, and grant us the power to become your children through Jesus Christ our Lord.
All—Amen.



Presentation of the Gifts
(Stand)

P—Pray, brethren...

All—May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands for the praise and glory of his name, for our good and the good of all his holy Church.

Prayer over the Offerings

P—God our Creator, we offer the gifts of bread and wine to recall the childhood of your only Son. Let our offering become the sacrifice of him who brought forgiveness and peace to the world.

Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

Preface II of the Nativity of the Lord

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

P—Lift up your hearts.

All—We lift them up to the Lord.

P—Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All—It is right and just.

P—It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God, through Christ our Lord.

For on the feast of this awe-filled mystery, though invisible in his own divine nature, he has appeared visibly in ours; and begotten before all ages, he has begun to exist in time; so that, raising up in himself all that was cast down, he might restore unity to all creation and call straying humanity back to the heavenly Kingdom.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you, as in joyful celebration, we acclaim:

All—Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts. Heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. *(Kneel)*



PILGRIMAGE SCHEDULES

TURKEY TREASURES (Apr 9 - 18, 2023)
with Fr. Phil Estrella, OMI
with optional extension to Israel

FOLLOWING THE GOSPEL TRAIL (Apr 9 - 23, 2023)
Israel & Turkey with Fr. Dennis Soriano

JOURNEYS TO THE LAND OF THE BIBLE (Apr 18 - May 1, 2023)
Egypt-Israel-Jordan with Fr. Jigs Rosalinda

ADRIATIC COAST WITH MEDJUGORJE (Apr 22 - May 5, 2023)
Austria - Slovenia - Bosnia Hercegovina - Croatia - Montenegro
with Fr. Herbie Santos

JOURNEYING TO EUROPE'S MARIAN SHRINES (May 6 - 23, 2023)
Portugal - Spain - France - Switzerland - Italy
with Fr. Bong Tupino

CONTACT US FOR FULL DETAILS AND SCHEDULES.

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Acclamation *(Stand)*

All—We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

THE COMMUNION RITE

The Lord's Prayer

All—Our Father...

P—Deliver us, Lord...

All—For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and forever.

Invitation to Peace

Invitation to Communion

(Kneel)

P—Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All—Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.

Communion Antiphon

(Cf. Lk 2:51)

He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to Mary and Joseph.

Prayer after Communion

(Stand)

P—Let us pray. *(Pause)*

Loving Father, you have

nourished us at the banquet in honor of the Child born of the Virgin. We pray that we may advance in wisdom and grow daily in faith and works of love, so that we may find favor in your sight.

Grant this through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

THE CONCLUDING RITES

P—The Lord be with you.

All—And with your spirit.

Solemn Blessing

P—Bow your heads and pray for God's blessing. *(Pause)*

Be gracious to your people, O Lord, and do not withhold consolation on earth from those you call to strive for heaven,

Through Christ our Lord.

All—Amen.

P—And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son (†), and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All—Amen.

Dismissal

P—The Mass has been offered. Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.

All—Thanks be to God.